



December 8, 2006

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to announce the publication of *A Comprehensive Immunization Strategy to Eliminate Transmission of Hepatitis B Virus Infection in the United States: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Part II: Immunization of Adults*. This publication, available in *MMWR* at www.cdc.gov/mmwr, updates previous recommendations for adult hepatitis B vaccination published in 1991.

With the successful integration of hepatitis B vaccine into the childhood immunization schedule and the subsequent decline in acute hepatitis B among children, the incidence of acute hepatitis B now is highest among adults. In 2005, adults accounted for approximately 95% of an estimated 51,000 new hepatitis B virus (HBV) infections in the United States. HBV transmission occurs primarily among unvaccinated adults with sexual and drug-related behavioral risk factors. However, vaccination coverage among adults with behavioral risks for HBV remains low. Accordingly, after considering various options, the ACIP has recommended a multi-faceted strategy to increase hepatitis B vaccination coverage among adults, including:

1. universal vaccination of adults in settings in which a high proportion of clients are at risk for HBV infection; and
2. implementation of standing orders in primary care and specialty medical settings to routinely vaccinate adults at risk for HBV infection and all adults seeking protection from HBV infection, without requiring acknowledgement of a specific risk factor.

Universal hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for unvaccinated adults receiving preventive care in the following settings:

- Sexually transmitted disease treatment facilities
- Human immunodeficiency virus testing and treatment facilities
- Facilities providing drug-abuse treatment and prevention services
- Health-care settings targeting services to injection-drug users
- Correctional facilities
- Health-care settings targeting services to men who have sex with men
- Chronic-hemodialysis facilities and end-stage renal disease programs
- Institutions and nonresidential daycare facilities for developmentally disabled persons

Vaccination is also recommended for all unvaccinated adults in the following populations:

Persons at risk for infection by sexual exposure

- Sex partners of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg)-positive persons
- Sexually active persons who are not in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship (e.g., persons with more than one sex partner during the previous 6 months)
- Persons seeking evaluation or treatment for a sexually transmitted disease
- Men who have sex with men

Persons at risk for infection by percutaneous or mucosal exposure to blood

- Current or recent injection-drug users
- Household contacts of HBsAg-positive persons
- Residents and staff of facilities for developmentally disabled persons
- Health-care and public safety workers with reasonably anticipated risk for exposure to blood or blood-contaminated body fluids
- Persons with end-stage renal disease, including predialysis, hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and home dialysis patients

Others

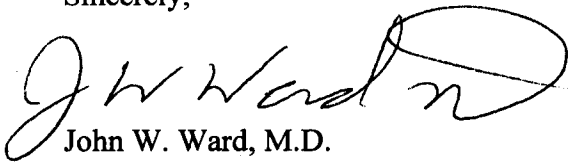
- International travelers to regions with high or intermediate levels (HBsAg prevalence of >2%) of endemic HBV infection
- Persons with chronic liver disease
- Persons with HIV infection
- All other persons seeking protection from HBV infection

Vaccination of at-risk adults should be offered as a standard component of comprehensive STD/HIV/viral hepatitis prevention services. CDC's divisions of Viral Hepatitis, HIV/AIDS Prevention, STD Prevention, and Immunization Services have embarked on a collaborative initiative to assist public health program managers in integrating adult hepatitis B vaccination into existing prevention programs.

To further assist providers with implementing these updated recommendations, the Division of Viral Hepatitis has launched a new website (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/recs/index.htm). This website provides information and resources targeted to each of the different settings in which adult hepatitis B vaccination is recommended.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to eliminate HBV transmission. If effectively implemented, the new ACIP guidelines will improve vaccination coverage and hasten elimination of HBV transmission in the United States.

Sincerely,



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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention